EQUIPPING WOMEN TODAY BY: FEZEKA TUKUTA – BBN ASSOCIATION.







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Equipping and Empowering Today's Woman

Introduction:

Judges 4 vs 4-5(Deborah was not only a prophet, a judge but an influential leader and led the armies of Israel to attack their enemies, let's arise and shine for the special purpose God has placed in our hearts.

The time has come for women to be empowered. Today's life demands and challenges hit hard on women social ills, and problems like gender based violence, domestic violence, ungovernable youth, women headed families, drug abuse, women against women abuse.

In fact the majority of today's women are still influenced by traditional cultural norms and values which regard women as subordinates of their male counterparts whose place is in the kitchen, the baby making machines. As a result in all spheres of life, socially, politically, educationally, religiously, to quote a few women are suppressed and deprived to occupy highest positions.

Women themselves need to change their negative attitude towards each other first before they can embark on carrying out this serious task. For instance it is believed that in facilities or institutions like Sassa, banks, Home affairs etc, if a woman needs to be genuinely attended she must seek a male's attention. We need to reach a point where we applaud each other, embrace each other's unique abilities.

All women regardless of age, background education and status must be empowered in the background contexts they are in, to fit in the ever changing world we live in. It is an undeniable fact that today we see a shift from what it used to be in the early seventies or sixties as women can no longer be stay at home mothers, with no education depending only on their spouses or parents for moral and financial support. Hence we as women we have to take a leap of faith and adapt to change to survive.

It is essential to understand that women empowerment involves the following:

The negative impact of cultural and religious beliefs, finding balance as career woman, between family and work, introducing business opportunities, education on leading a healthy lifestyle, and mentoring through exemplication of norms and values.

1.Impact of Cultural and Religious beliefs	Cultural and religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping women's perceptions of themselves and embracing their God given talents ,if not addressed properly and fairly both can have a negative impact on women empowerment. For instance the question of submission to the leadership of the husband is a good thing, but women developed a dependency syndrome which led them to be ignorant of what goes on in the domestic and financial affairs of the family. Not to mention the notion that women in the past were required to be silent which hindered them to voice out their opinions and assert themselves even in the workplace for leadership positions. Hence the majority women keep quiet about domestic abuse.

2.Finding Balance between a career,family and work	As women we lead hectic lives, fulfilling many roles-partner, mother, career woman ,friend and psychologist .Juggling all these balls isn't always easy and we may at times feel that our lives are out of control. In this day and age women should be fully equipped, adopt a culture of continuous learning and to be multiskilled as jobs and technology revolve all the time. At times in the workplace we should grab every opportunity of self development that comes our way and not settle to being a cleaner or receptionist until retirement. We should not work just to pay bills and stay alive there's also a time where we retire where we could maybe run orphanage homes, offer our services to other companies as the cost is living is too high nowadays one cannot rely on pension fund only. Our voices need to be heard even in Parliament, we should equip ourselves in all areas.
	However we need to be tactful on when to start pursuing our career development, as the late Myles Munroe wrote in his book that one should be careful to pursue one's dreams at the expense of your family. We exist in an era where children and families are adversely challenged emotionally and mentally, some of us are single parents hence being tied up in a career that consumes most of our time that our children and spouses feel neglected should be avoided. For instance one maybe in an extremely demanding position such as this outbreak of COVID19 that demands full attention and the children haven't reached the independence stage, There's a saying that says You should not chew more than you can swallow. Hence women whether single or married should make it a priority to teach their children Biblical principles as the church is the secondary institution that builds the character of an individual. Moreover we should open our minds to be equipped on psychological approaches that is relevant to the children of today who are continuously exposed to social media influences, even reinforcing our dreams into their lives is overrated. Our local churches should motivate women to start Single parents' Clubs where they can assist each other and have time to relax as well.
3.Women in business	It is imperative that we start our own businesses to earn extra income to survive when the economy is in recession and learn to stand on our own. Identify a skill or a talent that could be converted into a home based or online opportunity or partner with others and start a cleaning services company, some of us have good cooking skills etc, but not overlooking the pros and cons of your business in the near future and seek business advice. Women in rural areas who are illiterate should be encouraged to attend events that will equip them in agricultural farming, handwork, fashion designing ,recycling etc to earn a living and be taught to manage their businesses better. For instance in the King Williams Town area there's a project Dorcas which is under the BBN that empowers women for handwork, sewing etc
4.Leading a healthy Lifestyle	In the book of 3 John1 vs2,God wants us to prosper in every area of our lives including health. We are spiritual beings living in a physical body which means our health is our responsibility. For instance many of us have gone through painful and traumatic childhoods get professional help seek councelling if need

	be. We must also ensure that we get enough sleep, eat nutritious foods to stay strong and focused for our families, work and church responsibilities. Especially for women in leadership they should learn to delegate and not try to be Jack of all trades and master of none to avoid burn out. Hence we need to stay connected to our Source of strength, wisdom,peace and life, God Almighty.
5.Finances	Being in control of your money is being in control of your life. There's a saying that money does not grow on trees which means we need to guard against excessive spending and rather invest more. Women should be encouraged to attend workshops on handling finances, how to budget and debt management. We cannot afford to reach retirement age swamped in debt and frivolous spending. We should be wise and secure our old age with medical and life savings.

Conclusion:

In our contemporary society faced with numerous challenges the need for women empowerement is a great necessity for the development of society. The time has come that we overcome those cultural barriers that make sus feel inferior and know that through empowerment in all areas of our lives we can make a difference in other people's lives.